

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PORT O 01379 01 OF 02 202026Z
ACTION IO-13

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 AF-10 EA-07 EUR-12 NEA-10
CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04 NSAE-00
SIL-01 L-03 USIA-06 /087 W
-----202056Z 109842 /64

P 201945Z MAY 77

FM AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 695
INFO USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY KINGSTON PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY NASSAU PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PORT OF SPAIN 1379

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PLAB, ILO, XL, TD
SUBJECT: ILO SIXTY-THIRD INTERNATIONAL LABOR
CONFERENCE AND CONFERENCE OF CARIBBEAN
LABOR MINISTERS

RER: (1) STATE 102699, (2) GEORGETOWN 1023
(3) GEORGETOWN 1025, (4) STATE 103403

SUMMARY. THE CARICOM LABOR MINISTERS AT LAST
WEEK'S CONFERENCE IN GEORGETOWN WERE REPORTEDLY
GENERALLY IN FAVOR OF REMOVING EXTRANEIOUS POLITICAL
ISSUES FROM THE ILO BUT DEFERRED ADOPTING A COMMON
POSITION UNTIL THE BEGINNING OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE
WHEN THEY WOULD ALL HAVE INSTRUCTIONS FROM THEIR
GOVERNMENTS. THE MINISTERS DECIDED TO PRESS THE
LATIN AMERICAN GROUP TO RETAIN A CARIBBEAN SEAT ON
THE ILO GOVERNING BODY IN NEXT YEAR'S ELECTION BUT
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PAGE 02 PORT O 01379 01 OF 02 202026Z

WERE NOT SURE WHO WOULD BE THE CARICOM CANDIDATE.
THE GOTT HAS NOT YET INSTRUCTED ITS ILO DELEGATION
ON THE POLITICAL QUESTIONS, BUT ALL THREE T&T
DELEGATIONS HAVE BEEN SELECTED. END SUMMARY

1. EMBASSY OFFICER DISCUSSED RECENT MEETING OF
CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY (CARICOM) LABOR MINISTERS IN

GEORGETOWN AND ILO CONFERENCE WITH T&T MINISTRY OF LABOR PERMANENT SECRETARY GEORGE PATRICK AND T&T GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE ON THE ILO GOVERNING BOARD FRANCIS CORBIE ON MAY 19. CORBIE, WHO ATTENDED THE TECHNICAL OFFICERS MEETING WHICH PRECEDED THE MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE AS WELL AS THE CONFERENCE ITSELF, SAID THAT THE QUESTIONS RELATING TO REMOVING EXTRANEIOUS POLITICAL ISSUES FROM THE ILO WHICH WERE OF CONCERN TO THE US, WERE THOROUGHLY DISCUSSED IN BOTH MEETINGS. ACCORDING TO CORBIE, THE TECHNICAL OFFICERS FIRMLY SUPPORTED ELIMINATING THE CONSIDERATION OF CONTENTIOUS POLITICAL ISSUES BY THE ILO AND, IN FACT, RECOMMENDED THAT THE MINISTERS SUPPORT THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO ARTICLE 17. AT THE MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ITSELF, CORBIE SAID HE BELIEVED THERE WAS A CONSENSUS IN FAVOR OF ADOPTING THIS COURSE OF ACTION, BUT BECAUSE SOME MINISTERS, INCLUDING GOTT MINISTER DESMOND CARTEY, WERE WITHOUT SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS FROM THEIR GOVERNMENTS, THE ISSUE WAS DEFERRED. THE MINISTERS AGREED TO CAUCUS AT THE OPENING OF THE ILO CONFERENCE IN JUNE AND TAKE A CARIBBEAN POSITION BASED ON INSTRUCTIONS WHICH THEY WOULD HAVE BY THEN RECEIVED FROM THEIR GOVERNMENTS.

2. CORBIE SAID THAT HE THOUGHT TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, JAMAICA, SURINAM AND BARBADOS WOULD BE REPRESENTED IN GENEVA IN JUNE WITH FULL DELEGATIONS BUT THAT GUYANA WAS WAVERING ABOUT SPENDING THE CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 PORT O 01379 01 OF 02 202026Z

NECESSARY FUNDS. HE DID NOT KNOW ABOUT THE BAHAMAS WHICH WAS NOT REPRESENTED AT GEORGETOWN. HE SAID THAT UNFORTUNATELY MOST OF THE CARIBBEAN MINISTERS OF LABOR AND GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES WHO WOULD BE ATTENDING THE GENEVA CONFERENCE WERE NEW TO THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES AND PARTICULARLY NEW TO THE ILO AND ITS PROCEDURES.

3. ACCORDING TO CORBIE, PRIME MINISTER BURNHAM'S REMARKS AT THE OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE CONCERNING THE TIES BETWEEN POLITICS AND LABOR AFFAIRS (REFS 2 AND 3) WERE THE RESULT OF HIS HAVING READ THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TECHNICAL OFFICERS THAT POLITICS BE REMOVED FROM THE ILO. CORBIE SAID THAT THE GUYANESE MINISTER OF LABOR FOLLOWED BURNHAM'S LINE IN COMMENTS WHICH HE MADE AS CHAIRMAN OF THE CONFERENCE. LATER IN THE MEETING, HOWEVER, CORBIE SAID THAT HE EXPLAINED TO THE MINISTER THAT THE AMENDMENTS TO ARTICLE 17 DID NOT CREATE A TOTALLY

NEW PROCEDURE BUT RATHER GAVE SUBSTANCE AND MEANING TO POWERS ALREADY POSSESSED BY THE DIRECTOR GENERAL TO HOLD BACK RESOLUTIONS. THE MINISTER REPORTEDLY SAID THAT HE HAD NOT UNDERSTOOD THIS AND THAT THIS EXPLANATION WOULD HAVE AN EFFECT ON HIS ATTITUDE TOWARD THE ISSUE.

4. ON THE SUBJECT OF THE ISRAELI RESOLUTION, CORBIE SAID THAT HE BELIEVED THAT THE CARICOM MINISTERS HOPE THAT DISCUSSIONS BEING HELD BETWEEN THE US AND THE ARAB COUNTRIES WILL SUFFICIENTLY DEFUSE THE ISSUE SO THAT IT WILL NOT BECOME A MAJOR CONTENTIOUS ISSUE AT THIS YEAR'S CONFERENCE.
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PAGE 01 PORT O 01379 02 OF 02 202037Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 PORT OF SPAIN 1379

5. EMBASSY OFFICER REITERATED TO PATRICK AND CORBIE THAT THE US WAS STILL VERY MUCH CONCERNED ABOUT THIS SITUATION IN THE ILO AND WOULD BE WATCHING DEVELOPMENTS AT THIS YEAR'S CONFERENCE IN PARTICULAR IN DECIDING WHAT ACTION TO TAKE ON ITS NOTICE OF INTENT TO WITHDRAW IN NOVEMBER OF THIS YEAR. THE OFFICER ASKED WHAT ACTIONS MIGHT BE USEFUL FOR THE US TO TAKE BETWEEN NOW AND JUNE TO ENCOURAGE FAVORABLE ACTION BY CARICOM GOVERNMENTS. CORBIE

SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENTS WERE ALREADY WELL AWARE OF THE ISSUES INVOLVED. HE SUGGESTED THAT THE US APPROACH CARICOM GOVERNMENTS AT A POLITICAL LEVEL, REFER TO THE FACT THAT THE LABOR MINISTERS CONFERENCE DID CONSIDER THE ISSUES WHICH WILL CME BEFORE THE ILO CONFERENCE BUT DEFERRED TAKING A POSITION UNTIL JUNE, AND THEN RETIERATE GENERAL US CONCERN ABOUT THE FUTURE OF OF ILO.

6. IN THIS REGARD THE CHARGE SPOKE TO ACTING
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PAGE 02 PORT O 01379 02 OF 02 202037Z

PERMANENT SECRETARYYY OF THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS LENNOX BALLAH ON MAY 10 TO REMIND HIM OF THE APPROACH MADE BY HOROWITZ DURING HIS VISIT TO PORT OF SPAIN AND TO RESTATE SERIOUSNESS OF US CONCERN. BALLAH SAID THAT HE WOULD AGAIN CALL THE ISSUE TO THE ATTENTION OF HIS MINISTER BUT DID NOT INDICATE WHAT POSITION THE GOTT WOULD TAKE. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE MINISTRY OF LABOR HAS RECOMMENDED STRONG SUPPORT OF THE US POSITION AT THE ILO IN A PAPER TO BE SUBMITTED FOR THE APPROVAL OF CABINET. THE PAPER IS NOW WITH THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS FOR COMMENT AND RECOMMENDATION. WE INTEND TO RAISE THE ISSUE AGAIN IN THE NEAR FUTURE WITH EXTERNAL AFFAIRS ALONG THE LINES SUGGESTED BY CORBIE.

7. CORBIE REPORTED THAT THE CARICOM CONFERENCE DECIDED TO INSIST THAT THE CARIBBEAN RECEIVE ONE OF THE FIVE SEATS ON THE GOVERNING BODY ALLOCATED TO LATIN AMERICA. IF THE LATIN AMERICAN GROUP DOES NOT ACCEDE TO THIS REQUEST, THE CONFERENCE AGREED TO TAKE THE ISSUE TO THE FLOOR OF THE ILO CONFERENCE. ALTHOUGH TRINIDAD HAS ONE MORE YEAR TO RUN AS A MEMBER OF THE GOVERNING BODY, THE CARIBBEAN DELEGATES INTEND TO BEGIN DISCUSSING THE ISSUE AT THIS YEAR'S CONFERENCE. GUYANA WOULD NORMALLY FOLLOW TRINIDAD AS THE CARIBBEAN REPRESENTATIVE BUT THE GUYANESE GOVERNMENT IS NOT CERTAIN IT WILL BE ABLE TO FINANCE THE TRAVEL AND THE EXPENSES OF A REPRESENTATIVE. GUYANA ALSO WAS NOT SURE THAT IT WOULD SEND A DELEGATION TO THIS YEAR'S CONFERENCE, BUT IT WAS URGED TO DO SO IF IT EXPECTS TO BE ELECTED TO THE GOVERNING BODY NEXT YEAR. BARBADOS, WHICH WOULD BE NEXT IN LINE, WAS REPORTEDLY NOT INTERESTED.

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PAGE 03 PORT O 01379 02 OF 02 202037Z

8. THE TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO DELEGATION TO THE ILO
CONFERENCE WILL BE COMPOSED OF: GOVERNMENT--
MINISTER OF LABOR DESMOND CARTEY (FOR AT LEAST PART
OF THE CONFERENCE), FRANCIS CORBIE, ESBERT JOSEPH,
AND ANNELLA HUTCHINSON FROM THE MINISTRY OF LABOR,
CHIEF PERSONNEL OFFICER HILTON CUPID, AND TWO
TECHNICAL ADVISORS; EMPLOYERS -- MS. DIANA MAHABIR
(DELEGATE) AND NOEL WYATT (ADVISOR) FROM THE
EMPLOYERS CONSULTATIVE ASSOCIATION; AND WORKERS--
LABOR CONGRESS PRESIDENT JAMES MANSWELL (DELEGATE),
MS. URSULA GITTENS, NATHANIEL CRICHLOW, VERNON
GLEAN, AND CARLTON SAVARY (ADVISORS).
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Message Attributes

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